

eclectica
contemporary

João Ladeira
Crossing Over



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Opening
01 October 2020

Crossing Over is a solo exhibition by João Ladeira, featuring mixed media works installed on the ground floor of Eclectica Contemporary's building. Working mostly with brightly coloured Dutch wax fabric that have become ubiquitous across many African countries, Ladeira's works reflect on these surfaces that have become a contemporary symbol of African attire and textiles and the bodies that exist amongst and in relation to their relating histories.

The exhibition aims to contribute meaningfully to discourse on the displacement of people and social cohesion. Based both in empirical research within academic contexts as well as his own lived experience as a refugee and social research through storytelling with those around him, many questions are embedded in Ladeira's practice. For the past nineteen years, he has worked on issues affecting the migration of people around the African continent. Through his work, he points to the discord that prevails on the continent by representing the fraught journeys that many are forced to embark on in search of safety. Of this body of work, he explains, "my current works narrates the tragedy of migrants on the Mediterranean Sea, or what I see as a spiritual journey undertaken by many young Africans in pursue of a better life". Concurrently, through the themes and mediums he focuses on, his works celebrate the originality, cultural wealth and artistic diversity of the African continent and sit in conversation with the lingering questions we have yet to answer: how do we heal Africa's woundedness and restore our humanity? How do we save our people from poverty, war, hunger, slavery, displacement and disease?

A victim of two civil wars himself, Ladeira uses his own experiences of displacement to shed light on the daily struggles, complex relationships and overall humanity that unites people despite trying circumstances. "I have for many years lived with anxiety about the next step to follow", Ladeira notes, "I often ask myself, what is going to happen to me next? Will I get the right documentation to stay in the country? Will I be able to find a job? Am I going back to my country? All these questions fill up my mind 10 times a day, and create tension within me". Ladeira's art considers and reveals a human perspective of displaced people – people who are so often rendered nameless, story-less and detached from social society.

The spread of the bodies across the exhibition appears as repetition, asking viewers to reflect on the desensitization that occurs in response to the feed of stories that stream through news platforms and political debates. The use of multimedia is deliberate and has to do with the fact that as an art form, it includes different properties that comes together to create one body of work. Using a combination of drawing, collage and paintings, the works in *Crossing Over* each consist of overpainting on canvas or wax fabric. By overpainting and mixing textiles, there is an interplay between replicable nature of printed fabric with the unique mark-making of Ladeira's painting.

Ladeira sees it as an opportunity to give voice to the voiceless through art and to celebrate the greatness of the African continent. He explains, "as an artist, I believe that I have a social responsibility to make a positive comment, no matter how small, to engage my audience in this dialogue. I further believe that by shifting the focus from the negative and confrontation, as manifest in this tragedy and brutal images, I will be giving a chance to the audience to look at the migrants, men, women and children from a different angle. Consequently, this act aims to restore the dignity of the migrants and sensitize the passive spectator to take an interest in the suffering of migrants"

João Ladeira is a graduate of the University of Johannesburg where he earned a Masters Degree in Fine Art. He has worked in various disadvantaged community engagement programs around South Africa and exhibited on several group exhibitions in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria and at the 4th Guanlan International Printmakers Biennial in China. Ladeira has travelled extensively throughout the continents of Africa, North America and Europe. His solo exhibition, *Crossing Over* will run from 1 October to 26 November at Eclectica Contemporary, 69 Burg Street, Cape Town.



Holding On

2019

Acrylic, charcoal and fabric on canvas

117 x 160 cm



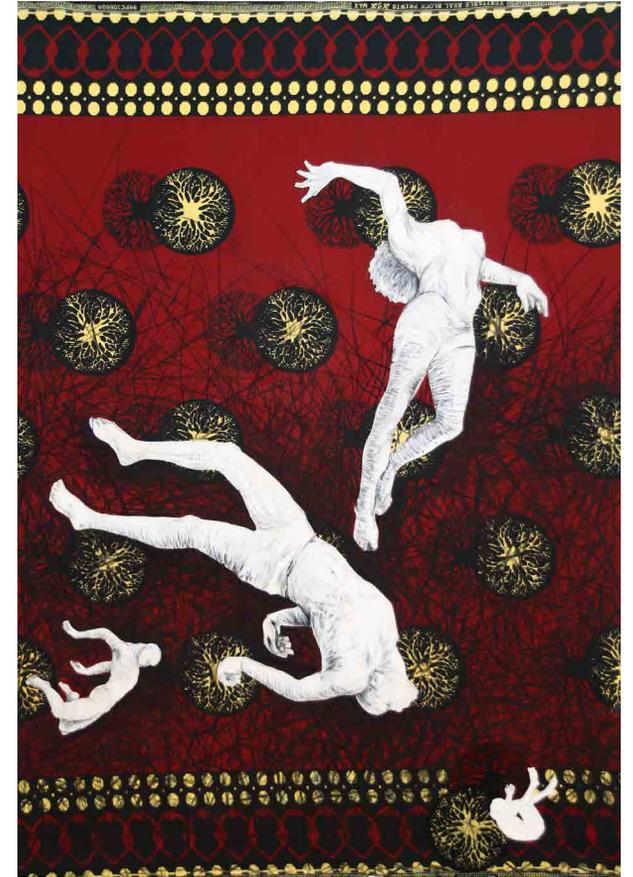
Crossing Over I
2020

Collage, fabric, charcoal and acrylic on canvas
80 x 114.5 cm



Crossing Over II
2020

Collage, fabric, charcoal and acrylic on canvas
125 x 125 cm



Crossing Over III
2020

Collage, fabric, charcoal and acrylic on canvas
80 x 114.5 cm

Tribute to Theodore Gericault "The Raft of Medusa"

2020

Acrylic, charcoal on canvas and fabric

72 x 83 cm





Sea of Roses II

2019

Acrylic, charcoal and
fabric on canvas

221 x 116 cm



Fin (left)

2020

Acrylic, charcoal on canvas and fabric

114 x 164 cm



Dark Blue (right)

2020

Acrylic, charcoal on canvas and fabric

117 x 172 cm

“Yemaya” the water goddess
2020
Acrylic, charcoal on canvas and fabric
117 x 200 cm



João Ladeira | *Crossing Over*

October 2020

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